REMARKS

Applicants are submitting herewith this Amendment concurrently with Applicants' Request for Continued Examination in response to the Final Office Action dated August 16, 2004. Claims 1-3 and 5 are presently pending where claims 1-3 and 5 have been amended as provided above. In view of the amendments and at least for the reasons set forth below, Applicants believe that the objections and rejections raised in the Final Office Action have been overcome and thus should be withdrawn.

As claimed, the method for estimating an amount of angular disagreement of planes of polarization between two polarization-maintaining optical fibers in which at least one of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers has a pair of stress applying sections where the amount of angular disagreement of planes of polarization of the polarization-maintaining optical fiber having the stress applying sections is estimated from a function of positions and heights of two peaks of brightness corresponding to the stress applying sections of a transmitted light produced by irradiating light on the lateral side of the polarization-maintaining optical fiber. As a result, the angular disagreement of the polarization-maintaining optical fiber can be estimated accurately.

In contrast, in a method for splicing two polarization-maintaining optical fibers according to the citation cited by the Examiner in the Final Office Action (United States Patent No. 5,611,015, Tokumaru et al.), three peaks of brightness of the transmitted light are obtained by irradiating light on the lateral side of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers, and first and second numerical values are calculated from relative positions of these peaks, and the two polarization-maintaining optical fibers are aligned by moving the fibers such that the first and second values are equal.

Indeed, as the Examiner recognized in the Office Action of October 28, 2003, Tokumaru merely calculates values corresponding to the relative positions of the peaks. Clearly, this fails to demonstrate that the amount of angular disagreement of the planes of polarization can be estimated using the heights of two peaks of brightness of the transmitted light produced by irradiating light on the lateral side of the polarization-maintaining optical fibers as required by the claimed invention. Further, nowhere does Tokumaru provide that the amount of angular disagreement of the plane of polarization of the polarization-maintaining optical fiber having the

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stress applying sections can be estimated from a function of positions and heights of two peaks of brightness corresponding to the stress applying sections as required by the claimed invention.

Moreover, the Examiner states in the Final Office Action that the height of a part of a signal or a curve is inherently compared to that of the other part of the signal or the curve where as alleged, by definition, a "peak" is a part of a signal or curve that is higher than other parts of the signal or curve. See, Office Action, p. 3. However, this indication merely explains how the part of the signal or the curve is regarded as the peak, and thus does not indicate a comparison of the heights of two parts of the signal or the curve which are previously regarded as peaks. Based on at least these reasons, Applicants believe that the Tokumaru is distinguishable from the claimed invention.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and earnestly solicit reconsideration of same.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY _____

Thomas C. Basso
Reg. No. 46,541
P.O. Box 1135
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135
Phone: (312) 807-4310

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